

Football Notes.

By "THE GOALIE."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

A VICTORIOUS FINALE.

CROYDON DEFEATED IN LAST MATCH.

CHAMPIONSHIP DECIDED BY GOAL AVERAGE.

Luton wound up an excellent season's work by defeating Croydon Common, who accompany them to the First Division, by two goals to one. The two teams therefore finish up level on points, but Croydon are placed first by virtue of their superior goal average. Luton would have needed a five or six goal victory to have gained top place, and it was quite out of the question with a team of the calibre of Croydon. The result of the match enabled the Luton team to retain two unique records. In the first place they have not only not lost a single Southern League match at home, but they have not even dropped a point. Secondly they have not been beaten by any of the other three English clubs. It is without doubt due to their success against their strongest rivals for promotion that their position is due, for they gained four points each from both Swansea and Stoke, and three each from Brentford and Croydon. There are also two other facts of which the team can be proud. They have scored more goals than any other team in the League, and secured more victories. In addition to that, only two other teams have had fewer goals scored against them. The total tally of goals is 92, which were scored by Simms 28, Wileman 27, Rollinson 17, Brewis 7, Bob Hawkes 4, Fred Hawkes 3, Durrant 3, Elvey 2, and Stevens 1.

With the weather brilliantly fine it was no wonder that the fixture attracted an attendance of about ten thousand, including about four hundred from Croydon, the receipts being £270. The Luton men had a splendid reception on taking the field, and the applause that greeted Croydon was little less hearty. Luton were still without Rollinson and Durrant so Stevens played at outside right and Brewis at inside left. Croydon played their championship team, including Bushell, the old Luton player, at centre-half. The game was fast, but not too exciting. A rather high wind made accurate football difficult, and as the ground was quite hard the ball was very lively all through the game. Luton just about deserved their victory, but they owe a lot to Wileman's opportunism. Simms was quite off the target, and in the second half he missed three chances that at any other time he would have accepted nine times out of ten. Croydon's boasted defence did not appear any stronger than Luton's, and the home team had a very distinct advantage at half-back, Frith in particular being miles ahead of Bushell, who gave a very moderate display. The Croydon forwards were heavier than the Luton quintette, and there is probably little to choose between them and Luton's line when at full strength. Barnfather and Chester were the best wing on the field, but Allman and Kingsby could not compare with either of the Luton wings. Stevens played a very good game, and Hoar put up a plucky display against the heavy back opposed to him.

Luton had the assistance of the wind during the first half, and were attacking most of the time. Very early in the game Wileman showed that he was in one of his most dangerous moods for he sent in a lightning cross shot that Williamson only just got his hand to and diverted for a corner. The Luton goal had as narrow an escape immediately afterwards, when a flying shot from Kingsby sailed just wide of the post and was brought back into play by the wind. Halfway through the first half Luton took the lead after an excellent movement. Simms swung the ball out to Hoar, who squared it beautifully. The centre-forward could not get to it, and it went on to Wileman, who slipped it out to Stevens. The latter centred, and taking the ball in his stride, Wileman had it in the net with an unstoppable shot. A glorious chance to equalise came to Page, but he bungled badly. He received the ball about two yards from goal, and had only to put it in the net, but he struck the post and Frith headed away. Half-time found Luton still leading.

With the aid of the wind in the second half, Croydon had naturally more of the play, and it was not long before they equalised. Page received a forward pass from Chester, and had a clear run for goal. Mitchell came out to meet him, but the forward shot just in time. He was injured in the collision with Mitchell, but was able to resume after two or three minutes. Then came the series of missed chances by Simms. The first was the easiest, for a centre along the ground by Stevens left him with only Williamson to beat, but he failed to trap the ball, which rebounded to the goalkeeper. On the other occasions he shot high over the bar from close range. Wileman nearly diverted a centre by Brewis into the net, this being one of many attempts by Luton, for in spite of the wind against them, they pressed strongly towards the close. At last Brewis sent a long forward pass to Simms. The centre forward was beaten by the pace of the ball, but Wileman was handy, and in spite of the close attentions of two defenders, he managed to get the ball into about two feet of goal space that was left exposed. It was an excellent goal, quite fit to cap the many other brilliant things that Wileman has done this season. Result:

LUTON 2, CROYDON 1.